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TRANSPORTATION OF RELIEF SUPPLIES TO POLAND.

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING,

IN RESPONSE TO A SENATE RESOLUTION OF JUNE 1, 1916, A REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE RELATIVE TO THE ATTITUDE OF THE BELLIGERENT GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE TOWARD THE SHIPMENT OF SUPPLIES AND OTHER NECESSARIES OF LIFE TO THE SUFFERING PEOPLE OF POLAND.

JULY 12, 1916.—Read, referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and ordered to be printed.

TO THE SENATE:

In response to the resolution adopted by the Senate on May 31 (calendar day, June 1), 1916, requesting the President to furnish information relative to the transportation of relief supplies to Poland, if the furnishing of such information is not incompatible with the public interest, I transmit herewith a report by the Secretary of State on this subject.

The report of the Secretary of State has my approval.

WOODROW WILSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, July 12, 1916.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 31 (calendar day, JUNE 1), 1916.

Resolved, That the President be, and he is hereby, requested to furnish to the Senate information as indicated below, if not incompatible with the public interests.

First. What is the present attitude of the belligerent governments concerning the shipment of food supplies and other necessaries of life to the suffering people of Poland? Do the belligerents permit such supplies to be sent without interruption or delay from the United States to Amsterdam or any other neutral port in Europe?

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Second. If the belligerent Governments make limitations or conditions or require guaranties from each other, what are the conditions and restrictions, and what are the terms of the guaranties thus required?

Third. What action, if any, have said belligerents taken toward giving the guaranties that may have been required?

Fourth. To what committees or authority in Poland may supplies be forwarded and consigned?

Fifth. To what extent is the actual work of relief in Poland being carried on and under whose supervision and control?

Sixth. What are the facts at the present time as to the shipment, transportation, receipt, and distribution of supplies? Can these proceedings be taken or are they delayed by pending negotiations with the countries involved or either of them?

Attest:

JAMES M. BAKER, *Secretary.*

THE PRESIDENT:

The undersigned, the Acting Secretary of State, to whom was referred the resolution adopted by the Senate of the United States on May 31 (calendar day, June 1), 1916, requesting the President to furnish information relative to the transportation of relief supplies to Poland, if the furnishing of such information is not incompatible with the public interest, has the honor to report as follows upon this matter:

On May 22 the department received through the American ambassador at London a printed memorandum from the British foreign office stating the terms upon which the allied Governments would permit and assist in furnishing transportation of supplies for the relief of the civilian population of Poland. (A copy of this memorandum is hereto annexed.)

On May 24 the American ambassador at London notified the department that he had transmitted copies of this memorandum to the American ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

The department on May 24 notified the American ambassador at Berlin and the American ambassador at Vienna to deliver to the Governments to which they were respectively accredited a copy of this memorandum and to ascertain their attitude.

On May 31 the department received a cablegram (a copy of which is hereto annexed) from the American ambassador at Berlin, stating the terms of the agreement which he thought Germany would make relative to relief supplies for Poland.

In a supplemental telegram dated June 13 the American ambassador at Berlin reports that the foreign office has stated to him that the conditions proposed in his telegram (received May 31) are entirely acceptable to the German Government.

On June 2 the department quoted by cablegram to the American ambassadors at London, Paris, and Petrograd, the cablegram received May 31 from the American ambassador at Berlin, and instructed them to ascertain and report as to the attitude of the Governments to which they were accredited on the position of the German Government relative to this matter.

On June 20 the department received a cablegram (a copy of which is hereto annexed) from the American ambassador at Petrograd, stating that the Russian Government declined to pass upon the proposed plan before conferring with the allies, but positively objected to 150,000 soldiers being maintained in Poland.

On June 15 the American ambassador at London received a note from the British foreign office (a copy of which is hereto annexed)

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replying to the German counterproposals relative to relief work in Poland. On July 5 the department instructed the American ambassador at Berlin by cable to present the substance of this note to the German Government and to attempt to ascertain its attitude relative thereto.

The department has as yet received no reply to the cablegram sent to the American ambassador at Paris relative to the German counterproposals.

On June 17 the department received a cablegram from the American ambassador at Vienna, in reply to its cablegram of May 24, stating that the Austrian under secretary of foreign affairs had promised to hasten the reply of the military authorities on the whole question of relief in Poland, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania.

On July 7 the department sent an identic cablegram to the American ambassadors to Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia, a copy of which is hereto annexed.

It thus appears that both the allies and the central powers have made propositions as to the terms under which relief supplies may be sent to Poland; that there are important differences in the terms of the two proposals; and that the State Department is endeavoring to induce the allies and the central powers to agree upon some plan which will permit the sending of relief supplies to Poland.

Respectfully submitted.

FRANK L. POLK,
Acting Secretary of State.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, July 10, 1916.

On the 21st of February last the United States ambassador communicated to Sir E. Grey a memorandum embodying the following proposals for affording relief to Poland:

"There are approximately 15,000,000 people in the German occupied eastern area, including Russian Poland and western Russia. Of this population between 3,500,000 and 4,000,000 people are concentrated in, or in the immediate neighborhood of, the cities of Warsaw, Lodz, Schenzochow, Vilna, Kovno, and Bella Ettap.

"In order to handle the problem of provision from a practical point of view, and at the same time with proper safeguard as to all the international phases in the matter, the following basis is proposed:

"1. The American commission shall undertake the revictualing of the abovementioned cities only.

"The German Government to undertake to furnish to the cities above mentioned a supply which will cover a ration of—

400 grams of potatoes per diem per capita.
10 grams of salt per diem per capita.
10 grams of sugar per diem per capita.
3 grams of tea per diem per capita.

"The American commission to import cereals to an amount which will afford a ration of 340 grams per diem per capita of wheat, or beans, peas, rice, maize; also with 40 grams of fats per diem per capita, and a moderate amount of condensed milk for children.

"2. That the German Government shall undertake to revictual the whole of the balance of the population in the occupied territory.

"3. The German Government will undertake to devise financial means for the provision of gold exchange abroad to pay for the foodstuffs purchased by the American commission. The allies to give necessary permits for these financial operations by the commission.

"4. The German Government will make the necessary arrangements to turn over to the commission sufficient German shipping to do the entire transportation from North America or other places to Danzig.

"5. The revictualling to last only until the 1st of October, at which time the new harvest will take care of the entire civilian population.

"6. The German Government to undertake that there shall be no interference with the imported foodstuffs; that they will be consumed absolutely by the native civilian population; that the American commission will be furnished every facility for the control of the entire revictualling of the cities in question, including the German contribution to the ration.

"7. In order to carry out the above it will be necessary to import approximately 40,000 tons of foodstuffs per month. It is proposed that such portion of these foodstuffs as go to the well-to do population should be sold, and in this particular the German Government is prepared to give free railway transport over the occupied areas and one-half railway rates over the German State Railroads. It is proposed to provision the destitute without cost."

His Majesty's Government at once referred the question of principle involved in these proposals to the Russian Government, who have now accepted it. His Majesty's Government are accordingly prepared to agree to the immediate inauguration of the above arrangement, provided that the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments are prepared to give certain assurances. In assenting in principle to the grant of relief to a territory occupied by the enemy, in spite of the statements recently published by the German authorities that they are in reality able to relieve the Polish population unaided, His Majesty's Government feel that they have made a concession in return for which they have a right to demand that their enemies shall now at length place beyond doubt their intentions toward the populations of occupied territories whose treatment by them in the past has been so much at variance with the responsibilities of civilized warfare and the dictates of humanity. The assurances required are as follows:

1. The scheme submitted by the United States ambassador relates only to that part of Russian Poland at present in the occupation of the German forces. His Majesty's Government consider it essential that any system of Polish relief should apply to Russian Poland as a whole, and they can not recognize the existing division into two spheres, occupied respectively by German and Austro-Hungarian troops. There must be a definite undertaking by the two governments that the export from the whole of Russian Poland of all foodstuffs, native or imported, will be absolutely prohibited, and that any excess over domestic needs which may exist in the southern part under Austrian administration (which is understood to be self-supporting) will be employed exclusively for the provisioning of northern Poland, whether such foodstuffs are utilized to supply the towns under the care of the relief commission or the country districts to be revictualed by the German Government.

2. It is understood from a document which has been communicated to His Majesty's Government by Mr. Walcott, of the Rockefeller Foundation, and of which a copy is annexed to this memorandum, that the German authorities in northern Poland undertake that all food supplies originating in Poland shall be used exclusively for the civil population and the constabulary. His Majesty's Government can not admit that the constabulary should be allowed to use native foodstuffs which have subsequently to be replaced by supplies imported by the relief commission. They must therefore request that in this respect the constabulary should be placed on the same footing as the occupying army.

3. From the same document it appears that the German authorities wish to export from Poland any excess of the potato supply. As a result of the experience which they have gained in connection with Belgian relief, His Majesty's Government are most reluctant to agree to the exportation from Russian Poland of so-called excess supplies, since the question of what constitutes an excess is largely a matter of opinion. Nevertheless, in order not to prolong the negotiations, His Majesty's Government agree to the export of potatoes at such times and so long as, in the opinion of the neutral relief authorities, an excess supply in fact exists over and above the requirements of the whole of Russian Poland.

4. The German vessels mentioned under paragraph 4 of Mr. Page's proposal must fly a neutral flag, be under the sole control of a neutral body to be agreed upon, be manned by neutrals, and be run entirely at the expense of the German authorities.

5. It should be understood that the responsibility of the German Government is not ended by the supply of the partial ration mentioned in the above scheme of relief. His Majesty's Government can not undertake to allow the relief commission to import more than a minimum supplementary ration over and above the maximum which the enemy are in a position to supply at any given time.

6. The neutral relief authorities in Poland must enjoy absolutely free and unfettered facilities for the communication to their London office of any data connected with their work. They must have every facility to satisfy themselves of the manner

in which the undertakings of the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments are being carried out in all parts of Poland. It is, of course, understood that the "German relief officer for the civil population" mentioned in the inclosed memorandum before alluded to shall have no control of any kind over and shall in no wise interfere with the complete discretion of the American commission or its representatives.

7. The German and Austro-Hungarian Governments should undertake, as a part of the present arrangement, adequately to supply and care for the populations of Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro, all of which countries are now being reduced to a state of starvation through the removal or the use by the occupying forces of the supplies of native foodstuffs. The carrying out of this undertaking should be under the supervision of neutral subjects or organizations in those countries.

His Majesty's Government trust that the above proposals, which represent merely the renouncement of indefensible practices and assurances for the due respect of the lives and rights of the population of occupied territories in the future, will meet with the prompt acceptance of the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments, so that the necessary preliminary arrangements may be made without delay.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 10, 1916.*

[Inclosure.]

DRAFT GUARANTIES SKETCHED BETWEEN MR. WALCOTT, OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION, AND THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES IN POLAND.

In the event that the Commission for Relief in Belgium shall be able to assist in the "ravitaillement" of Poland, the following principles are agreed to by the German Government:

1. The Americans have the right of control in exact agreement with the convention arranged for the north of France and [or] Belgium.

2. The German authorities pledge themselves that all the food supplies introduced by the Americans shall be applied exclusively to the use of the civil population, and distributed according to the methods now obtaining in north of France and [or] Belgium.

The distribution is to be made through the Polish local committees under the supervision of the American representatives or delegates and the German relief officer for the civil population.

3. The German authorities guarantee that all food supplies originating in Poland shall be used exclusively for the civil population and the constabulary. Excepted from the above are surplus potatoes left after the needs of the civil population and constabulary have been completely covered. The constabulary is required to pay cash marks or equivalent for whatever foodstuffs they purchase or requisition at a fair market price. The allowance of potatoes per capita per day for the population in determining this surplus is to be at least 400 grams per day.

4. The German authorities guarantee that the transportation of the imported American food supplies destined for the General Government of Poland, the Etapp of Biala and the Government of Wilna shall be shipped from Dantzig to the German frontier at one-half rate, and without charge from the German Polish frontier to its destination in Poland or the Etapp.

The above guaranties are given by—

The General Government of Poland.
The Government of Wilna.
The Government of Biala Etapp.

OBERST SCHALL.

BRUSSELS, *February 11, 1916.*

BERLIN, *May 30, 1916.*

SECRETARY OF STATE, *Washington:*

Have had conference to-day with Geheimrat Lewald, representing interior department; Geheimrat Grunewalt, representing foreign office; Prince Lubecki, of Polish committee; and Donovan and Stoever, of Rockefeller Commission. Germany can not accept the proposition as made by England, because, first, Germany can contract only as to Polish territory in her own control. However, in my opinion there is no doubt but arrangement similar to one outlined below can be made with Austria. Please note that all towns named are in territory occupied by Germany.

Second. Germany can not make question of relief of Poland dependent on Germany and Austria relieving Servia, Montenegro, and Albania, since Germany is not in control of those countries.

I think an arrangement following lines can be made:

First. The arrangement to apply to all Polish territory occupied by Germany, commencing 50 kilometers back of firing line.

Second. Germany will give to inhabitants of cities to be relieved the ration proposed.

Third. Germany will undertake the remainder of population outside will be fed.

Fourth. It is necessary that occupying or police army of about 150,000 men be fed on food bought in Poland. These troops are sometimes 10 or 15 in a village and difficulties of transport makes this necessary.

Fifth. Proposition as to ships accepted.

Sixth. Germany will arrange to pay for goods wherever bought and their transpor

Seventh. Germany agrees to proposition that excess potatoes shall be exporte only when commission agrees and that no food is to be exported from Poland and use except as above stated. Provisions as to details of control can be arranged. German is willing to accept control as stated in contract signed by Geheimrat Lewald, D Bicknell, and me in April, 1915.

Will get details as to numbers of occupying police army and how many in towi and how many in country.

GERARD, *Berlin.*

PETROGRAD, *June 15, 1916.*

SECRETARY OF STATE, *Washington:*

Just had audience with Sazonoff, which requested June 6, concerning Polan relief. Delay caused by his absence. Declines passing on proposed plan before con ferring with allies. Furthermore, positively objects to 150,000 soldiers or anythin near that number being maintained in Poland. Sent Dearing to Sazonoff's assistat during the minister's absence June 10, but was told Sazonoff would pass on questio himself. Please advise embassy further developments.

FRANCIS,
American Ambassador, Petrograd.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 15, 1916.*

His excellency the honorable W. H. PAGE.

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of June 2, in which you are good enough to communicate the reply received from the German Government to the proposals of his Majesty's Government for the relief of Poland.

The phrase somewhat loosely used in this reply as to the arrangement being made "to apply to all Polish territory occupied by Germany, commencing 50 kilometers back of the firing line," is, I suppose, intended to allude only to the responsibility assumed by the German Government to feed this area, and does not imply an attempt on the part of the German Government to extend the importations of foodstuffs to be made by the American commission to any other districts but the cities specified in the original proposal which you handed to me, and in my reply. His Majesty's Government could not, of course, for a moment consider importations to other destinations besides those towns; but I do not know whether His Majesty's Government are to understand that the German Government intend to allow the population within 50 kilometers of the firing line to starve.

I do not think it is necessary, at this point in the discussions, to enter into any detailed analysis of the German reply, and I will confine myself to the two points of primary importance raised in it.

The German Government disclaims any responsibility for the relief of Servia, Montenegro, and Albania on the ground that it is the Austro-Hungarian Government which is in control of those countries. I can not accept this disclaimer, knowing to what extent the policy of the central empires is controlled by the German Government and knowing that it is therefore not a question of the German Government exerting its "good offices" with the Austro-Hungarian Government, but of the two Governments jointly assuming a responsibility toward the population whose territory has been invaded by their joint armies. Nothing short of a binding engagement of this kind, which the central powers are perfectly able to give, can satisfy the Governments of the allies, who in this matter are only asking for the same measure of joint action on the part of their enemies which they themselves have already taken in their consultations and their decision upon this question of Polish relief.

The second point is, to my mind, of even greater importance. The German Government disclaims responsibility for the Polish territory occupied by Austria on the ground that that territory is not within the sphere of Germany's control. The Governments of the allies regard Poland as a whole and they can not allow the fate of its population and the question of life and death whether that population shall or shall not die of hunger, to be parceled out between Germany and Austria, each country claiming part of Poland in connection with their political schemes for the future, and each disclaiming responsibility for the part occupied by the other. Until there is agreement between the Governments of the central Empires to throw the resources of the whole country into one, and to give to the Poles, as Poles, the produce of the soil of their own country, the Governments of the allies can not move. This is a question of principle, but even were it not so the conduct of the Austro-Hungarian Government, as it is developing at the present moment in southern Poland, would make it impossible for His Majesty's Government to leave that region out of account in the scheme of relief. I annex hereto a copy of an order issued by the Austrian governor general of Lublin which throws sufficient light on the methods of coercion and the intentions of exploitation which the Austrian Government are employing and cherishing.

For the rest, we must adhere to our original demands, which I still believe would be accepted as reasonable if the German and Austrian Governments were sincere, and I can only trust that the efforts of the United States representatives in enemy countries and of the representatives of the American relief organizations will soon elicit a more satisfactory reply from the Governments of the central Empires.

Believe me, my dear ambassador,

Yours, sincerely.

The royal imperial and military governor general of Lublin has published the following announcement:

"In May when the spring work in the fields will be practically completed the military administration will begin work within the territory administered by it on the building of roads and on the Vistula. Numerous laborers will be used for this purpose. The military administration will summon them from among the local population and form them into labor detachments, each of which will be employed as far as possible within its own village or its neighborhood. It will, however, be impossible to avoid the employment of some detachments in other districts of the government than their own. It is, however, to be clearly understood that all labor detachments will be used exclusively within the territory of the Government of Poland in Austro-Hungarian occupation. As need may arise all men fit for work will be called upon. The only exception will be those to whom the district authorities may grant exemption in consideration of their profession or for other weighty reasons, in accordance with instructions issued to them. In case of need also women will be employed, provided they come forward of their free will. The workmen will be properly paid and fed.

"The attention of the population is hereby drawn in advance to the forthcoming order, and to its purpose, so that no one should give credence to false rumors. As work is concerned which will be of considerable economic advantage to the entire country, and in connection with which each particular workman will find a sufficient livelihood to maintain himself and his family, the military administration expects that all men fit for work will apply in their own well-understood interest for inclusion in the labor detachments, and will in that way avoid compulsory orders. The intended works are unavoidably necessary from the military point of view, and must be carried out in any case. The military administration hopes that it will not be necessary to use compulsion.

"Lublin, April 26, 1916.

"For the governor general.

"DIETRICHSTEIN, *Major General.*"

[Circular.]

JULY 7, 1916.

Inform Government to which you are accredited that since the United States for many months, at the request of the various belligerent powers, has been acting as intermediary in the negotiations between the belligerents relative to a proposed agreement as to the terms under which relief supplies may be introduced into Poland and distributed therein, and since all the negotiations have so far failed to result in any agreement which could bring about the desired result, although all the countries

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interested have manifested a willingness to permit relief supplies to be sent to Poland under certain specified conditions, the United States, therefore, in the name and interests of humanity, now appeals to all the belligerent countries to consider whether it is not possible for the powers on each side to make such mutual concessions in the terms proposed by them for the regulation of shipments of relief supplies into Poland as will make it possible for an agreement to be reached under which relief can be given to the suffering inhabitants of Poland. The United States is instructing its ambassadors to Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Russia to communicate this message to the Government to which they are respectively accredited.

POLK, *Acting.*

To American ambassadors at London, Paris, Petrograd, Berlin, and Vienna.

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